

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6331

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AU

SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY ELECT TAUS/BUSEK

REF: VIENNA 6428

1. 18TH EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF AUSTRIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (OVP)
JULY 31 ELECTED DR. JOSEF TAUS AS PARTY CHAIRMAN AND OVP
CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE AND DR. ERHARD BUSEK AS PARTY GENERAL
SECRETARY BY VOTES OF 481 TO 10 AND 480 TO 6, RESPECTIVELY;
NO OPPONENTS WERE NOMINATED.

2. OVERWHELMING ENDORSEMENT BY ENTHUSIASTIC, CHEERING PARTY
FELLOWS AND SPEECHES BY TAUS AND BUSEK LEFT NO QUESTION THAT NEW
TEAM WOULD TAKE OFFENSIVE AGAINST LONG TERM SOCIALIST GOALS AS
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WELL AS SPECIFIC RECORD OF CHANCELLOR KREISKY'S GOVERNMENT.

TEAM'S INITIAL PERFORMANCE AUGURS FOR MORE SPIRITED AND UNITED OVP EFFORT TO OUST SOCIALISTS THAN WAS PROBABLE UNDER SCHLEINZER/KOHLMAIER DUO.

3. ABILITY OF OVP TO MOVE QUICKLY, DECISIVELY AND WITH NO SERIOUS INTERNAL STRESS TO NAME SCHLEINZER'S SUCCESSOR, AND TO EXPLOIT PUBLICITY ON EXTRAORDINARY SITUATIONS OF SCHLEINZER'S DEATH AND SELECTION OF NEW LEADERS TO ADVERTISE OVP, HAS LED OVP LEADERS AS WELL AS LESS BIASED OBSERVERS TO CONCLUDE THAT OVP POSITION AS ELECTION CAMPAIGN BEGINS HAS NOT WORSENERED AS RESULT SCHLEINZER'S DEMISE. OVP LEADERS BELIEVE SELECTION OF TAUS AND BUSEK HAS HAD ADVANTAGE OF CASTING KREISKY AND SOCIALISTS IN CONSERVATIVE ROLE WHILE OVP ASSUMES REFORMIST STANCE. TAUS'S SPECIFIC DISPARAGEMENT IN HIS ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF QUITE RADICAL NEW PROGRAM JUST PUBLISHED BY AUSTRIA'S YOUNG SOCIALISTS, THEY SAY, WAS DESIGNED TO HOLD KREISKY TO MORE CONSERVATIVE SOCIALIST POSITION OR TO OPEN SOCIALISTS' RIGHT WING TO OVP RAIDS SHOULD KREISKY NOW TRY TO ASSUME REFORMIST POSITION HIMSELF BY EDGING LEFT.

4. AS IN INTERVIEW REPORTED REFTEL, TAUS'S SPEECH AGAIN STRESSED ESSENTIAL ROLE STABLE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SYSTEM PLANS IN MAINTAINING AUSTRIAN NEUTRALITY. HE SAID HE SUPPORTED BOTH DETENTE AND INCREASED TRADE WITH EAST BUT THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT THAT OBJECTIVE IN BOTH CASES IS TO SUSTAIN WESTERN-ORIENTED DEMOCRATIC AND PLURALISTIC SYSTEM IN AUSTRIA.BUCHANAN

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